

# **The Changing Nature of Conflict**

*New Dimensions  
New Players  
New Perspectives*

*A Program Series Report  
Funded by the Ford Foundation*

*The Women's Foreign Policy Group*

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**The Women's Foreign Policy Group** is committed to global engagement and the promotion of leadership, visibility and participation of women in international affairs. WFPG fulfills this mission through in-depth international issues programs and its annual Directory of Members, which showcase women experts and leaders and highlight their voices, expertise and contributions. Through its mentoring and leadership development programs, the WFPG helps ensure the serious consideration of women for top-level positions and fosters the development of the next generation of women leaders. Other efforts focus on expanding the voices of women in the media, developing partnerships and co-sponsorships with other women's and international organizations to reach broader audiences and link diverse groups of women domestically and internationally.

Founded in the early 1980's, The Women's Foreign Policy Group in 1995 became a full-fledged 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization operating in Washington and New York, whose membership represents a broad cross-section of the international affairs field: government, NGOs, multilateral organizations, business, academia, and the media. In 2000, the WFPG highlighted women's leadership in international affairs at its Fifth Anniversary celebration which honored Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and was covered extensively by the media including C-Span.

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# Preface

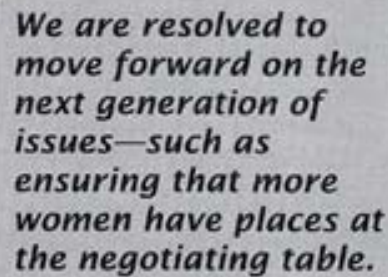
The Ford Foundation in 1999 awarded a grant to The Women's Foreign Policy Group (WFPG) of Washington, D.C., to mount a series of programs on the changing nature of conflict, both within nations and internationally. This report coalesces the major themes of those events to highlight the role of women in all stages of conflict, elevating their voices and diverse perspectives on conflict. The views are those of women leaders and experts from around the globe who represent decades of experience in government, international organizations, NGOs, academia, and the media.

This report is not an empirical survey, nor is it intended to be. With an eye toward matters that need further practical action and research, it summarizes prevailing views of leading women who know the international scene from the policy perspective and on the ground, and who have worked in its hot spots. Common threads of discussion are pulled from those lively sessions, especially on matters that call for research and policy attention.

"The Changing Nature of Conflict" series began in the fall of 1999 and concluded in midsummer 2000. Each program in Washington, D.C. drew a highly diverse mid-day audience of fifty to more than 100 members of WFPG, their male and female colleagues and guests. Represented were diplomats, nongovernmental organizations, legislators, trade unions, business and research executives, Congressional staff, development agencies, United Nations personnel, international bankers, and journalists. Twenty-seven panelists participated in the six-part series. Transcriptions of panel discussions have been altered only to make smooth reading of oral presentations; nothing of substance or nuance in these quotations has been changed.

The Women's Foreign Policy Group is proud to have sponsored these dialogues on the growing role of women in international conflict resolution. We are resolved to move forward on the next generation of issues, such as ensuring that more women have places at the negotiating table in venues such as the United Nations as well as in other international and national bodies.

We hope you will find that this report poses provocative questions about the evolving role of women in war and peace, while planting useful guideposts on the road toward ensuring that more women secure "a place at the table."



*We are resolved to  
move forward on the  
next generation of  
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the negotiating table.*

*-Patricia Ellis  
Executive Director  
Women's Foreign Policy Group*

# Acknowledgments

The Women's Foreign Policy Group wishes to thank the Ford Foundation for its generous support of the program series "The Changing Nature of Conflict: New Players, New Dimensions, New Perspectives" and to acknowledge the guidance and support of Mahnaz Ispahani and Catherine Feingold through every step of the series from conception to completion.

The WFPG appreciates the support of Board members who were actively involved in the series as speakers, moderators, participants and program resources. We also thank the WFPG staff and interns who worked tirelessly to make these programs so successful. We thank our panelists for their thoughtful presentations and, in many cases, their willingness to travel long distances to participate in the series. Additionally, we appreciate the support and contribution of the many WFPG members and friends who actively participated and enriched these program discussions.

## Five Questions

To make sense of numerous discussions of a many-faceted subject such as the changing nature of conflict, we drafted five sets of questions to guide each panelist. Thus, women executives of United Nations agencies speaking in one program were invited to ponder the same questions we gave to women working in multilateral banks, international legal institutions, the media or NGOs in particular hot spots.

Of course, their answers illuminated different corners of the same subject. Asked to consider how women may shape the course and outcome of conflict, an agency head might refer to the effective intervention of women directing relief efforts, while a local activist would point to Somali women approaching warlord factions. An Irish trade unionist would cite women's activism in the civil rights movement, winning their role in negotiations leading toward the recent peace agreement in Northern Ireland. Suggesting next steps toward expanding women's role in preventing conflict, local activists recommend more educational and day-to-day support for women to step into public roles. Multilateral and U.N. officials point out that more women are needed in upper management and the political and peacekeeping echelons of those organizations.

A good place to begin this report is with the five sets of questions that were intended to stimulate panelists from different sectors and levels of involvement in conflicts. These form the framework of five chapters that draw together our participants' recommendations from different angles of the universe of social conflicts in which they've been involved: preventing, mediating, negotiating, resolving-and mopping up afterwards, to repair the human damage and restore the rule of law.

1. How has conflict changed in recent years, especially since the dissolution of a bipolar ideological division in the world? How has decision making about conflict changed, if it has? Who are the institutional and individual players nationally and internationally?
2. Are new voices and new players involved in conflicts? Can they make a difference in the outcomes of conflict?
3. To what degree have women been able to shape the course, outcome, and aftermath of conflict? Have women's voices been heard? Have they been taken seriously? In this respect, is there a difference between the situation today and a decade ago?
4. How do new players achieve a place at the negotiating table in situations of conflict? How will the greater participation of women promote conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction? How might this play out in various aspects of international work-legal, political, governmental, multilateral, nongovernmental and voluntary organizations?
5. What steps come next? What actions must be taken to ensure that all stages of conflict prevention and resolution include new voices, new perspectives and new players-especially women?

This report closes with recommendations for next steps to ensure women a seat at the table. These ideas emerged from panelists' conclusions and their interaction with audiences throughout "The Changing Nature of Conflict" series. Of particular note is the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000, which appears as an Appendix; it urges the U.N. Secretary General and member states to increase the representation of women at all decision-making levels in conflict resolution and the peace process.

# The Series

## *The Changing Nature of Conflict: New Dimensions, New Players, New Perspectives*

The six-part WFPG series on the changing nature of conflict began in the fall of 1999 and concluded in the summer of 2000. The series elevated new voices and perspectives on how conflict affects women and how women, NGOs, multilateral organizations and international legal institutions influence conflict.

The Women's Foreign Policy Group is proud to have sponsored these dialogues, which amplified women's voices and their growing impact on conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

Twenty-seven panelists and their audiences engaged in lively interchanges incorporating grassroots, local, national, regional and international perspectives. The series included the following programs and speakers:

*"The Changing Nature of Conflict: New Dimensions, New Players, New Perspectives"*

*April 4, 2000*

**Jane Holl Lute**

Executive Director, Project on Role of American Military  
Power, Association of the U.S. Army

**Phyllis Oakley**

Former Assistant Secretary, Intelligence and Research; and  
Population, Refugees and Migration  
U.S. Department of State

**Deepa Ollapally**

Program Officer, U.S. Institute of Peace

**Craig Murphy**

Chair, Department of Political Science, Wellesley College

**Pauline H. Baker**

President, Fund for Peace

*Moderator*



*"Conflict and Women's Roles and Contributions" Part a):  
The Role of Women in Bringing Peace to Northern Ireland  
October 6, 1999*

**Avila Kilmurray**

President, Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust  
Belfast, Northern Ireland

**Patricia Ellis**

Executive Director, Women's Foreign Policy Group  
*Moderator*

*"Conflict and Women's Roles and Contributions" Part b):  
The Role of Women in Conflicts Worldwide  
May 24, 2000*

**Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela**

Carr Center for Human Rights, Harvard University, and former Commissioner,  
Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa

**Malathi de Alwis**

Senior Research Fellow, International Center for Ethnic Studies  
Colombo, Sri Lanka

**Maria Duzan**

Director, Center for Journalism, and columnist for *El Espectador*  
Bogota, Colombia

**Marina Skrabalo**

Ron Brown Fellow, Syracuse University; Coordinator, MIRamiDA Peacebuilding  
Training and Support Program, Center for Peace Studies  
Zagreb, Croatia

**Ann Hope**

Advisory Services Officer, responsible for gender equity, Irish Congress of Trade  
Unions  
Belfast, Northern Ireland

**Laketch Dirasse**

Regional Director, East, Central and the Horn of Africa, United Nations Fund for  
Women (UNIFEM)  
Nairobi, Kenya

**Patricia Ellis**

Executive Director, Women's Foreign Policy Group  
*Moderator*

*"The Role of NGOs in Conflict Prevention,  
Resolution and Post-Conflict Reconstruction"  
June 13, 2000*

**Wendy Luers**

Founder and President, Foundation for a Civil Society

**Benita Diop**

Executive Director, Femmes Africa Solidarite  
Geneva, Switzerland

**Ancil Adrian-Paul**

Campaign Manager, International Alert  
London, England

**Karen Orenstein**

Washington Organizer, East Timor Action Network

**Catherine O'Neill**

Director, U.N. Information Center (Washington, D.C.)  
*Moderator*

*"The Role of Multilateral Organizations in Conflict Management and in  
Strengthening Women's Participation in Peacemaking and Conflict"  
June 27, 2000*

**Karen Lissakers**

U.S. Executive Director, International Monetary Fund

**Angela Kane**

Director, Americas and Europe Division, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations

**Betty Bigombe**

Social Scientist, Post-Conflict Unit, The World Bank

**Sreelakshmi Gururaja**

Senior Advisor, Gender, Partnerships and Participation Section, Program Division,  
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

**Barbara Crossette**

United Nations Bureau Chief, *The New York Times*  
*Moderator*

*"The Role of International Legal Institutions in Conflict  
and Conflict Resolution"*

*July 28, 2000*

**LaShawn Jefferson**

Deputy Director, Women's Rights Project  
Human Rights Watch

**Pilar Rueda**

Director, Maria Va  
Bogota, Colombia

**Nina Bang-Jensen**

Executive Director  
Coalition for International Justice

**Ruth Greenspan Bell**

Director, International Institutional Development  
and Environmental Assistance  
Resources for the Future

*Moderator*

# How Has Conflict Changed in Recent Years? An Overview 1

*“The shift in our perception of what constitutes international conflict is driven by three large international social movements of the late twentieth century: the movements for human rights, the environment, and women.... We are reconceptualizing the notion of security from a narrow military security to a more comprehensive human security to a more comprehensive human security.”*

*- Deepa Ollapally, U.S. Institute of Peace*

**B**ecause our program series’ basic theme was the changing nature of conflict, this report appropriately begins with an overview of major shifts in the essential nature of international and regional conflict over the past few years. Like chapters that follow, this one combines observations on the topical questions from multiple panelists, as well as themes that emerged in their interactions with audiences. Changes in the characteristics of conflict, as well as players in decision making in conflict situations, are examined here.

The dismantling of the Cold War framework of two enormous power blocs constituted by the United States and the Soviet Union, together with their allies and client states, has reconfigured the landscape of world conflict. Conflict today is propelled by the added dynamic of an increasingly international system in which conflict can more rapidly send economic shock waves across the world. Since the end of the bipolar era, the frequency of violent conflict and the number of victims has actually increased worldwide. Professor Craig Murphy of Wellesley College dubs this moment in history a time of "hot peace."

## **From Bipolarity to Multiplicity of Conflict**

Today, many of the gravest conflicts grow out of social and economic inequality, locally and among nations. From fears of a worldwide conflagration across national borders, fears of conflict today are directed more toward civil wars, separatist movements in existing states, factional warfare, religious and ethnically-based conflicts.

Although there has been a shift from weapons of mass destruction toward conventional warfare, panelist Jane Holl Lute, a scholar at the Association of the U.S. Army, observed, "The tactics remain the same. We still kill each other in the same good old-fashioned ways we've always used. It may not be Cold War, but it's old war." Moreover, the shift from clashes between at least minimally disciplined state armies to those between bands of relatively untrained locals that have characterized recent conflicts means that civilians are now the chief victims.

Among civilians, women are disproportionately targeted for violence. Rape is now used as a weapon of war. In some conflicts, such as the Sudan, women and children become major targets because warring factions know it is often to them that food and medical aid is directed. Panelist Maria Duzan, award-winning investigative journalist and columnist from Colombia, also observed that, for civilians, including many women, wishing to remain uninvolved in conflict has often become deadly in itself; both "left" and "right" factions want active commitment to their version of the struggle, and this is lethal for both civilians and journalists.

Another particularly distressing aspect of conflict today is the widespread appearance of children as soldiers-in Myanmar, Liberia, Sudan, Sierra Leone and other places. Although not unknown to history, the phenomenon is less likely to be tolerated today by the world community. Several panelists reflected that the long-term social consequences and difficulties of reintegrating child soldiers into civil societies are daunting indeed.

New use of the Internet for communications in conflict cuts both ways-toward greater involvement, but also greater parochialism. Both warring factions and peacemaking bodies are able to gain and transmit news and information very rapidly on the Web. Several panelists underscored that receiving outside news, as well as transmitting emergency information from inside a conflict, is critical. Further, they see the Internet as a tool uniting small, far-flung peace movements and conflict resolution efforts, allowing them to share information and best practices.

## **From National to Human Security**

More than one panelist thought that Americans had a clearer concept of conflict during the Cold War era. Today, local conflicts that are not easily categorized as unambiguous threats to U.S. national security interests (as traditionally

defined) proliferate, and they often flare up in distant parts of the world. Such conflicts do not resonate with the U.S. public, who question why they should care what happens in an ethnic battle in some remote corner of Africa or Asia with no vital commodities or direct U.S. interests at stake. Other observers believe that the appropriate response is, rather, to redefine national security more plainly to reflect the long-term peril of ignoring conflicts that mirror the growing global inequality between rich and poor, democratic and less democratic societies. Small or smoldering conflicts have a way of growing into larger conflagrations.

As Deepa Ollapally of the U.S. Institute for Peace put it, for many people across the world, the perception of conflict has now shifted from a focus on military security to "a more comprehensive human security." The shift in perception of what constitutes international conflict is driven by the three great movements for human rights, the environment, and women.

Pauline Baker, President of the Fund for Peace, underscored this new concept of security by pointing out that AIDS now kills more people in Africa than all its wars combined. Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Phyllis Oakley observed, "It simply defies common sense to watch the

State Department budget go down while the Defense Department goes up.....If there was ever a time in our history when we need to prepare for the next couple of centuries by working on the internal conflicts with allies and international organizations, and preventing wars from flaring, it is now."

### **More Players than Governments and Armies**

Since both the nature of conflicts and the perception of them have changed in the past decade, new players have joined national governments. The institutions that were built to deal with ending wars were all premised on, first, a Cold War framework where big-power involvement was an immediate risk and second, an interstate network that ended or temporarily forestalled conflict through government-to-government negotiations.

Today, panelists agreed, multilateral institutions play a far larger role. This is particularly true in attempts to negotiate peace in asymmetric conflicts and conflicts of identity, where the largest international interests do not come into play. As Craig Murphy suggested, the expanded list of situations where multilateral institutions are intervening now includes peace maintenance, democratization and economic transformation. Multilateral activism goes beyond United Nations activities, to embrace the development banks and the World Bank. As an official of the World Bank's post-conflict unit, Betty Bigombe, noted: "It's no longer true that when a crisis occurs, we pack our bags and leave....If a country is in crisis, we try to have a presence. That may not be a physical presence, but we'll work with any agency [on the ground], so that when we design our intervention, we'll have the best information to help do that."

Most of the world's national armies find peacekeeping and society-building missions novel and rather alien to their traditional training in the making of war. Other institutions are now more involved. For example, nongovernmental organizations may conduct democracy-building activities "such as free media workshops or legal consultations. Development agencies, not the military, may fund local or state law-enforcement agencies to help nations in post-conflict periods to build effective, nonpartisan police forces. Retooling the professional military is today a subject of intense political debate, while some retraining has already occurred due to service in places such as Bosnia and Kosovo.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are also more important actors in today's conflicts than they were in the past. Whether distributing food or medical assistance or attempting to improve human rights, the environment, or democratic electoral practices, NGOs loom larger at critical points in the cycle of conflict. Cooperation or conflict among them greatly affects the violent situations in which they participate.

NGOs are, in many respects, responsible for the new movement toward "transitional justice" that attempts to achieve civil reconciliation in conflict-scarred areas such as South Africa, Rwanda, the Balkans or Northern Ireland. Through participation in NGOs at the grassroots, national, regional and international levels, women have made major contributions to conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. They have mobilized as mothers against violence, as peace activists, as fighters and mediators. Women have connected across borders regionally and trans-nationally. Their impact is being felt in organizations such as the U.N. where, as Murphy pointed out, there is a correlation between the number of women officials in peacekeeping, peace building and democratization operations and the success of those operations.

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss in greater detail women's multifaceted involvement at all levels of movements to realize and embody the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women are vitally engaged in ending war while promoting peace, democratic institutions and human rights. As our discussions made vivid, women are pivotal agents of change as their societies struggle toward greater openness, equity and civil peace.

## 2 How Can New Voices and New Players Make a Difference?

*"Northern Ireland was, and to some extent still is, a traditional conservative society in which women knew their place-they rocked the cradle but not the boat-and stood by their men. Now, they're more likely to stand against their men as they run for political and other public offices. "*

*-Ann Hope, Irish Congress of Trade Unions*

The mechanics of coming within range of "a place at the table" of decision making in conflicted situations are the subject of this chapter. Because our series (like the Women's Foreign Policy Group itself) focuses on women as a voice that must be heard in public discourse, our examples of how they are moving toward a place at the negotiating table do likewise. The lessons women are learning apply well to any new player in public decision making.

How have women begun to make a difference in the politics of conflict resolution? Grassroots voluntarism is the starting point for many-often involvement with a single bread-and-butter issue that in time fosters broader political activity. Women have acquired new skills, at the same time applying their old skills in new contexts. They have exploited the difference between female and male perspectives on conflict in their societies to build bridges across factional divides. They have used a kind of intellectual jiu-jitsu to compel traditional politicians to revisit old assumptions about what can and cannot be changed. In response to protests that some novel course of action is impossible, women's new voice asks "Why not?"

Using the Internet and multiplying their resources many-fold by building coalitions across factions, regions, and national borders, women are forcefully seeking a place at the table. This chapter looks at how they approach this task in different cultures, using similar tools.

### Up from the Grassroots

Local grassroots activity is the beginning of public involvement for most women. In many cultures, it is a long leap for women even to take public roles rather than solely to remain responsible for domestic arrangements-including, in some cultures, the agriculture that puts food in their bowls. In time, it can happen that thousands of local groups organized for other purposes-for example, rural women's groups in Northern Ireland-assume larger roles in general politics.

Malathi de Alwis, anthropologist and peace-group leader in Sri Lanka, emphasized the importance of local women in peacemaking in her country and expressed greater faith in them than in women at the top: "We shouldn't just look at people in the leadership, but at the grassroots. People work at different levels toward peace." While there are many women leaders in Sri Lanka-including a president whose platform stressed the resolution of ethnic conflict-their motives and effectiveness can be questionable in contrast to those of local women, who have no ties to political patronage structures that often cause the very problems they purport to address. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela of South Africa, a former commissioner on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, echoed de Alwis in highlighting the contribution of local women; while not always in positions of leadership, grassroots women teach us "to look beyond status to learn from ordinary, women's important lessons."

Despite skepticism about women leaders in high office, who serve in systems designed without regard to women-systems that are changing at what seems a glacial pace-Chapters 3 and 4 will show that strong women leaders are indeed helping official bodies to make progress on women's concerns. The women foreign ministers, ambassadors, multilateral organization and NGO officials as a group, though they are unrepresentative in their total numbers, complement the work of local women described here.

### Common Losses Make Common Causes

Women's involvement in single issues or social concerns such as child health can lead them to broader political activity. In some cases, their victimhood itself motivates involvement, as women try to transform negative into positive, life-changing experiences. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission greatly benefited from local women's commitment and dedication to putting conflict behind them, noted Gobodo-Madikizela: "Many victims who came to the Commission were women. They had so much to show us through the way they responded and reached out to people who

had caused them so much pain." Deepa Ollapally confirms that women in other regions have also "organized themselves around common losses-such as the mobilization of mothers against the state in Argentina," and similar activities in South Asia. Their "perception of common losses," she added, has allowed women to organize and extend their hands across sharp ethnic, racial and factional boundaries.

In Northern Ireland also, Ann Hope of the Irish Trade Unions Congress said, "Women survivors have played important parts in the peace process that has unified women from various backgrounds." LaShawn Jefferson of Human Rights Watch added that women victims concentrate on getting better protection when conflict arises. Their survivorship experiences sensitize them "to work to support and further women's need for equality in all aspects of their lives in times of peace, so they're less likely to be victimized in times of war." Women often become active through supporting changes in domestic laws to protect them from abuse.

## **Many Paths to Activism**

Trade unionism, social services voluntarism, peace activism, civil rights and women's rights campaigns also become pathways into more general political activity. General-interest women's groups such as associations of rural or village women are also important. Both Ann Hope and Avila Kilmurray, an officer of the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust and former leader of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, are leaders who emerged from the trade union movement.

Betty Bigombe, who visited Somalia in 1999, "was amazed at the group of women who are moving, getting the two sides to talk, organizing children to go to school, providing basic social services-and doing it with very little support from outside." In South Africa, women of all races were active in the longtime anti-apartheid movement and charitable voluntarism before they took political roles. Noted Laketch Dirasse, regional director for East and Central Africa for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), "We do learn a lot from the case of South Africa, where women were the ones who took the lead in peace processes long before the apartheid regime failed. But once the regime collapsed, these groups mobilized again and had the women's charter to ensure that women's concerns were not marginalized: that's an example of success."

In Northern Ireland, "Women have actually been very successful working for local community development throughout all the years of the troubles," noted Ann Hope. "The problem is that the men are in power, and women can only work within the parameters set by them. For nationalist women the change began with the civil rights movement, when they joined men in the streets. For many women, that was their first political activity and their introduction to public politics."

"From having been influencers in the home, Northern Ireland's women have become a voice at the negotiation table," said Avila Kilmurray. "More than 1,000 locally-based community and women's groups have been established throughout the North in the past three decades....In working-class areas, women did more. They got involved in community action." With children at risk, husbands often in prison, jobs scarce, women focused on the bread-and-butter issues and were able to talk and work across lines. The civil rights movement was a key impetus to raising women's consciousness in Northern Ireland. The peace movements in both Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka bred local women's involvement, although Malathi de Alwis noted the movement in her nation feels unheard, partly because the women lack lobbying and overtly political skills in a recurrent conflict where government tactics are always changing.

## **Acquiring New Skills, Redirecting Old Ones**

Through grassroots community work, women in most regions learned they lacked necessary skills. They would have to learn skills in communication (including the Internet), lobbying, legislative processes and fundraising. These were cited as acute needs by panelists from all countries. Training is a needed focus for NGOs, Pauline Baker insisted. Especially in societies suffering violent conflict, notes Avila Kilmurray, "peace building must be seen as an open, accessible system that rests on broad participation and responsibility, not exclusively on the owners of the negotiating table."

The speakers from Northern Ireland noted how difficult women found political fundraising for their coalition's candidates after the Good Friday agreements-a coalition born of their women's network of local groups. Women found it far more difficult to ask funds for themselves or their candidates, than to ask donations for a social service or community project. But, added Kilmurray, they quickly learned how to construct a telephone tree from American campaigners when women candidates were standing.

Women call upon old skills and qualities in new contexts, as well. "Camaraderie" and sociability, as Irish activist Sandra Armstrong put it, plus the women's focus on children (and therefore the future) helped Northern Irish women to act with persistence and patience in bringing together local Unionists and Nationalists. Outright nagging by the women's

coalition finally persuaded a drafter of the Good Friday Agreement to include a section on advancing women in public life, according to Avila Kilmurray.

In Argentina and South Africa, women's extraordinary attitudes toward the perpetrators of outrages on them and their families did much to advance reconciliation, perhaps by shaming those who stressed vengeance alone. Women, asserted Kilmurray, are attitudinally more likely to meet the challenge posed by reconciliation, which "is not to remember and justify. True reconciliation is to remember and change." Patience, pragmatism, a focus on the future, a disinclination to nurse grievances-although all women do not share these qualities, they are common enough that panelists appeared convinced that women in numbers can change the substance of politics for the better.

### **A Different Perspective on Conflict**

Women were able to exploit in positive ways the differences between male and female perspectives on conflict. They questioned old assumptions about the limits of the possible in politics, and pushed out the boundaries. Deepa Ollapally noted that "Women approach conflict from a different vantage point-as a social ill that needs to be remedied, as in health concerns about tobacco or AIDS" rather than as a matter of ironclad principle that must be resolved at any price. A hard-edged winners/losers perspective is less relevant to most women than ending conflict in a fashion that wreaks no special hardship on any group and protects the vulnerable.

"It was not easy," said Avila Kilmurray, "to be a women's party [during the Good Friday negotiation period] in a largely male and particularly macho political world. There was verbal abuse and physical abuse, sniggers and innuendo-and, once-the novelty value had worn off, side-lining by the media." Yet the women's coalition in Northern Ireland-experienced lobbyists after "years outside the system of hard decision making"-probably submitted more written proposals to peace negotiator Senator George Mitchell than any party but Sinn Fein. Wisely, they kept in close touch with Mitchell's woman staffer who remained on the ground in Northern Ireland while the chief mediator shuttled back and forth across the Atlantic.

A vivid example of the different approaches to conflict taken by women and men was the table setup proposed for those peace negotiations. A woman judge in Dublin, after leading a pre-forum on the negotiations, urged that an oval table be used-"Don't let them have a square table, because they'll end up facing each other like that." Kilmurray said the women's coalition took this recommendation to the politicians and "were told to go away." Negotiators for the ten parties sat down with Mitchell at a square table. Because all the Unionist parties started with "U," they ended up on one side, facing the other "so the actual physical setting was quite confrontational," as the women had warned.

Yet the women's coalition persisted. The final Good Friday agreement included two provisions of great importance to them: a strong reference to victims and support for cross-community work, as well as a segment on the advancement of women in public life. With some humor, Kilmurray reported that the women "finally convinced the exhausted drafter such a statement could go in, because we claimed women had been living in an armed patriarchy for the past 30 years."

### **The Internet Enables Locals to Build Coalitions**

In recent years, the Internet has assisted the emergence of new voices and larger coalitions of new players. Dating from the years building up to the 1995 Beijing Conference, then the Beijing+ 5 meeting in 2000, women's groups promoted their concerns, joined or formed international coalitions by sharing information, alarms, and political lessons on the Web.

Isolated local groups no longer need be isolated from the best practices women are using in other societies to win their rights and affect law and policy. "In the post-Yugoslav region it was the Internet that provided the only means of communication between different small islands of non-violent activism. It sustained communication among activists and helped families look for each other," noted Marina Skrabolo of the Center for Peace Studies in Zagreb, Croatia. Using the Internet, Malathi de Alwis reported, the Sri Lankan Women's Coalition for Peace "was actually very much influenced by the movement in Northern Ireland." "In the crisis countries," said Laketch Dirasse, "women in the organized peace movements are using the Internet. That's the link through which they send out information, link up and learn from others' experience within the broader international women's movement."

In 1999, International Alert and more than 100 NGOs and other institutions launched the global campaign "Women Building Peace: From the Village Council to the Negotiating Table." Its aim is to encourage "both the international community and individual men and women to act to ensure women's equal inclusion in peace and foreign policy processes," explained Ancil Adrian-Paul, campaign manager for International Alert. That organization "is actually bringing information home to the women through on-line services that allow women to put forward their views on



conflict at the big processes like the Beijing+5 meeting last year."

Aiming to move from village councils to places at the table, women in conflicts are using their traditional skills, learning new ones, and realizing the value their unique perspectives add to the difficult process of stabilizing their societies.

# 3 How Have Women Shaped the Course and Aftermath of Conflict?

*"Women bring their life experience into an organization, and use it."*

*-Betty Bigombe, World Bank official in Africa*

*"Women have a lot at stake in peace. They're the ones who must care for the sick, the injured, and also continue to manage the whole livelihood of communities. They are the ones who reconstruct basic social organization in societies that have gone through long processes of conflict."*

*-Marina Skrabolo,  
Center for Peace Studies  
Zagreb, Croatia*

We turn now to women's influence on the course of conflict and, equally important, their efforts to repair and reconcile their societies in conflict's wake. Several common threads characterize the tapestry of cultural differences in conflicts in which our panelists participated, or which they faced in their official capacities.

Any generality, such as the statement that women are peacemakers, is subject to exceptions. Some women are intense ethnic factionalists or national leaders who make war. Other women are militarized by conflict-urban guerrillas in Colombia, fighters in the long-running Sudanese war, rebels in Sri Lanka. However, almost no women are military commanders, though they may be armed. Women may carry automatic weapons but "still be the cooks," and still be powerless, said Maria Duzan of Colombia.

Nevertheless, our panelists thought most women hold perspectives on conflict that differ from those of men. To a greater degree, women seek consensus. Since women disproportionately become victims of bloody conflict, finding a middle way that minimizes damage and victimization is obviously in their interests. Trying to minimize harm also reflects traditional roles of women as mothers and nurturers. Women also tend to believe that familiarity breeds not contempt, but the breaking of stereotypes that prolong hostility. In Ireland, Africa, the Balkans and Latin America, they have been willing to join or lead local groups that cross barriers.

Women's responsibility for children points them toward the future, not to nursing grievances of the past. They bring to the table a long view-patience to grasp that community building, and certainly community restoration, cannot be accomplished overnight by the mere application of money or rhetoric.

Sharing their experiences of bitter conflict across borders, women are shaping larger coalitions to resolve conflict or to repair the damage it causes. As Craig Murphy said, "Conflicts have generated local women's peace activists who are making more and more connections with the larger, transnational women's movement." Women have been courageous leaders, but their leadership is often expressed outside the formal political system that men dominate.

The aftermath of conflict is often when women come into their own as leaders. Women leaders appear especially concerned with what one might call "followership." They may link all parties, often by helping to meet essential daily needs, in order to rebuild their communities. Women as the majority of witnesses who testified before South Africa's Commission on Truth and Reconciliation; outreach by Bosnian women across ethnic lines; negotiations by Sudanese women for hostage releases-all exemplify women's activism in peacemaking and reconciliation.

## **More Effective, but Still Outside the System**

Nevertheless, panelists as a group were pessimistic that the formal structures of politics and decision making in their countries adequately incorporate women's priorities. A long-term cultural change is necessary for this to occur, most thought. Women must be acknowledged as equally capable and fitted for public roles, without suffering the condescension, sexual innuendo and "backlash on their private lives" that Marina Skrabolo of Croatia saw in the sad story of a leading peace activist whose husband became violently abusive because he lost a job while she became a public leader. (Skrabolo added that postwar government grants for rebuilding did not come to the women's groups although they had been a major force in community reconciliation.)

Panelists generally agreed also that women are not assured a "place at the table" in formal politics, no matter how much they have contributed to ending a conflict. Women's growing influence too often remains pressure from outside, not inside, the corridors of power.

Women's role during conflict has extended even to negotiation, though they rarely have official status. (Exceptions, of course, are the few women in foreign ministerial or multilateral offices, or the women leaders who participated in peace missions or negotiations in El Salvador and Guatemala.) Somalia and Sudan have suffered ongoing crises-Somalia for 12 years and Sudan for nearly 30 years. Lakatch Dirasse calls women there "the anchor-the greatest stakeholders who want to see peace at any cost," but gender discrimination gives them secondary status and no decision-making power.

What happens during conflict? "Women start playing roles traditionally performed by men-they move into areas traditionally reserved for men; they even bear arms," Dirasse said. But when war ends, women are expected to revert to their traditional roles. They no longer accept them passively. "In Somalia, women do negotiate release of prisoners and hostages who have been taken, but no one pays attention to that. However, we know that women individually and collectively have negotiated some of those releases." Dirasse was hopeful that Somali clan elders will now include women in peace conference delegations, but the outcome was uncertain when she spoke.

On the whole, women still operate outside the formal political systems of their nations. Those systems are for the most part framed and run by males, whose approach to conflict is often antithetical to women's. Further, people with power (male or female) do not willingly cede it to new groups unless there is little alternative or they perceive some advantage in doing so. Most of our panelists realize that the women's movement has far to go toward the goal of simple equity in participation. Ann Hope said "The problem is, the men are in power and the women can only work within the parameters set by them." Marina Skrabolo noted that, in the Balkans, "Just as everywhere else, I guess, at least 90 percent of activists in civil initiatives are women-and that number is just the opposite of the number of women in the political structure and parties." Women have been given a lot of public credibility in Colombia as peace makers, but Maria Duzan finds this largely cosmetic. The down side of women's advancement in some fields, she said, is that "women are looked at as the hope for our country, and that is difficult to cope with, perhaps sentimental....Women are allowed to become top executives, and top managing editors, but opinion is for men."

Some panelists were dubious about the effectiveness and accountability of women leaders in formal political structures. Malathi de Alwis was skeptical of women leaders in Sri Lanka and elsewhere in South Asia, saying they often take over from male relatives who had been leaders (sometimes retired, often assassinated). Genuine commitment to bringing women to the table doesn't mix well with dynastic politics. Sri Lanka has a very high rate of female literacy-about 94 percent-as well as good education and health care. But "there's a problem with the kind of accountability these powerful women have, because they come in with the support of political patronage structures that don't truly make them responsible to feminists or peace movements." De Alwis said Sri Lankans held out hope for a peace process when the current president, a woman, came to power; instead, the war has escalated. "Let's move away from just saying that women are peaceful and will work for peace," she warned.

Maria Duzan also questioned whether women in power make a positive difference, commenting that in Colombia "They have power, but they behave like men in using it."

Ann Hope concluded that "Women have held together the fabric of the world through 30 years of war [in Northern Ireland], a fact acknowledged and saluted, but their exclusion from political and other decision-making fora reinforces their efforts to develop their own structures and process, and to seek their own power base in society....You're talking about a massive culture change in women as well as men, though, because many women don't think that women ought to be in these [public] positions, either."

## **A Few Women Cooperating Near the Top Can Help**

Lakatch Dirasse departed slightly from these views, pointing to "a big difference in Rwanda since the genocide" because seven women permanent secretaries now sit in the restoration government-not just overseeing "soft issues," but running ministries of planning, justice, and agriculture as well. Further counterbalancing skepticism about women leaders in traditional structures, it is important to recognize panelists' appreciation of changes brought by the relatively few women who do attain high positions.

Chapter 5 recounts the big difference women officials and program directors are making at the U.N., and summarizes recommendations drawn from these highly placed women's long experience in international politics. Women who attain ambassadorships, cabinet positions and equivalent status and power can, if sensitized to women's priorities, articulate these concerns and push for their consideration. Moreover, they have some public credibility, as well as a public podium

and relatively good access to media coverage.

Leaders can have impact individually, but more so when they join together. Collectively, women ambassadors at the U.N. have pushed for more women's involvement in peacekeeping and top political jobs. U.S. Secretary of State Albright began gatherings of women foreign ministers, and on her watch an office of international women's affairs was opened in the State Department. Swanee Hunt, when U.S. Ambassador to Austria in the Clinton administration, began an initiative that brought together Bosnian women from all ethnic and religious groups during the great bloodletting. Issues such as the treatment of women in Afghanistan and international traffic in women for sex came to the policy table because of women officials.

Still, women exert effective advocacy mostly outside the formal system. Even a top woman leader such as U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and former Irish president Mary Robinson says, "We don't have power in the traditional sense. Through giving leadership, through advocacy, through influence and indeed through operations on the ground for a number of agencies we can make a difference. So, what is our power? I think it is very substantially a moral authority, and I think it's only possible to exert true moral authority if you do it with integrity, with great attention to factual accuracy...and never letting go by an opportunity to state those principles."

### **Seeing Conflict as a Social Disease**

Many of our discussions highlighted women's different perspective on conflict. They view conflict more as a social disease than a test of strength or principle. "It's a social ill that needs to be fixed, like poor health, AIDS, or gun safety," maintains Deepa Ollapally. Concern for their children and their own safety is an important motivation for women's activism against conflict. Avila Kilmurray cited stunning facts that galvanized local women's peace activities: a survey in Northern Ireland found that 90 percent of children aged 9 to 11 had seen cars being hijacked or burned; half had seen guns used; and 37 percent had witnessed a bomb explosion. "Women are everyone's targets," said Pilar Rueda, a consultant to the Colombian government on gender issues who has participated in negotiations between the government and guerrilla factions, "the targets of regular groups, paramilitary groups and the armed forces." LaShawn Jefferson of Human Rights Watch explained that women know very well that their rights are most likely to be violated during war; historically, there have been no meaningful penalties for such violations.

Women are equally concerned about the cruelties war inflicts on the next generation. Betty Bigombe had this to say about the damage done to African children: "Some are forced to join the rebels, and even governments participate in recruiting child soldiers. If a child has been forced to kill, he or she is permanently traumatized-he's now a lost child, too, and needs special attention." Girls are often most seriously affected, noted Sreelakshmi Gururaja of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): "They end up as sex slaves, being exploited and then rejected both by their own communities when (and if) they return, and by those who recruited them."

### **Consensus Seekers and Agents of Change**

To confront conflict, women choose the weapons of consensus-building and change. They seek the rarely-found "middle way" that can join former opponents in cooperative community building. Ann Hope said Northern Irish women have been "very successful working for development in their own communities and in solidarity with women from other communities, all through the years of conflict....We saw ourselves not as pacifiers but as agents for change, and that view we put forth at the Fourth U.N. Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995."

Such consensus-seeking, change-making activism helps women prepare themselves to assume larger public roles. Ann Hope added that the experience of their women's delegation in preparing for Beijing was important training for their later, far larger political coalition's campaign to influence provisions of the Good Friday agreement and to run and elect more women to the resulting assemblies. Women "use their traditional role of caregivers but transform it into something else- they build upon it and come up with another kind of activism," said Marina Skrabolo.

She offered a Balkan example of change-making activism that propelled women into general political activity. A town in western Slavonia was divided between Serbs and Croats. A group of women had formed a self-support group to collect and clean bricks for rebuilding their homes. All the bricks came from the Croatian part of town, however, but women of both sides helped each other. "All of them," said Skrabolo, "had experienced war as victims, in a way. Many had lost children or spouses." From that self-support group grew a laundry project, and when their town was reintegrated, "these women were the first to cross the line to visit the Serbian women, the enemy, who had stayed in the villages, to ask them what they needed and bring them some necessities." Now, five years later, Skrabolo reports, this group that began as bricklayers has become fully integrated with the women's movement in Croatia, which helped to double the

proportion of women in parliament from seven to 18 percent in the most recent election.

The negotiations leading up to Northern Ireland's Good Friday peace agreement were substantively affected by the women's political coalition that grew out of similar local groups, as described in Chapter 2. Women's pressure achieved a clause on advancing more women in official political parties, as well as language about reconciliation and redress for victims of violence.

## **Dissolving Stereotypes with Inclusion**

The Croatian bricklaying group's story also illustrates women's tactic of using the power of personal acquaintance and the provision of everyday services to dissolve stereotypes that perpetuate conflict. Ann Hope cited another example from Northern Ireland, where nationalist and Unionist women, Catholic and Protestant respectively, were much divided. "The Unionist women didn't engage in feminist issues or politics either, viewing them as part of the republican nationalist tradition, not something they as good Protestant loyalist women should be engaged in."

Then Protestant women began to realize that "The issues that Catholic and nationalist women were actually fighting and organizing around, were *their* issues, too:" no child care, women receiving lower wages than men for the same work, unequal access to education and training. Eventually, "The penny dropped, and loyalist women also began to organize-then started to contact and to work with women from nationalist areas on their common issues." This has "created uniquely vibrant women's organizations and networks that have played a pivotal role in drawing attention to problems of social and economic deprivation" in the North. Women's organizing across lines has also opened a positive space for political dialogue and reconciliation, "often unacknowledged by the traditional political mechanisms."

Inclusiveness is another hallmark of women's approach to conflict resolution or mitigation. Perhaps women acutely feel their own exclusion from decision making. Avila Kilmurray related the outcry from conventional party politicians when the Northern Ireland women's coalition insisted on the inclusion of a small loyalist party in negotiations-a party the large-party politicians thought they could shut out. Ann Hope explained that "We thought we needed a different system that would allow smaller groups and parties to come through." She believes inclusiveness springs from "one vital commonality-within the networks of interlocking hierarchies [in Northern Ireland], women are subordinate to men, and that's been a major factor unifying women from different backgrounds to demand they have a part of the peace as well as being survivors of the war."

In Croatia, Marina Skrabolo found, "It was the women who were the first ones to go into refugee camps and start organizing and supporting other women refugees themselves." Croatian women "were doing sit-ins in the apartments of people from the Serbian minority whom the military was evicting." This entailed great risk in a society where "if you are for non-violence, you are actually a traitor to the collective interest" in the minds of many people. But these women dared to include the excluded.

## **Sharing Information, Seeking Education**

Information-sharing, education and training also mark women's approach to solving conflict. Maria Duzan believes that such progress as women have made in allaying Colombia's conflicts is due to "the big revolution in education" that enabled women to climb the ladder to the point where "We have lots of Colombian women in very important positions."

Marina Skrabolo and African women panelists repeatedly cited the benefits of workshopping and skills training for women. Other panelists stressed the multiplier benefits of training and equipping women to use the Internet. Pauline Baker urged NGOs to focus more intensively on in-person training. Bineta Diop of Femmes Africa Solidarite trains women in direct mediation and conflict resolution; her group also does preliminary research on conflicts, then "brings all the parties together, as we did in Burundi."

## **Using Patient Persistence**

Patience and persistence came up again and again as hallmarks of women's approach to resolving conflict. Malathi de Alwis mourned the constant ebb and flow of conflict in her country that "requires constant rethinking of our strategies," plus enormous patience as gains seem minuscule. Maria Duzan agreed that "you don't find solutions." In Colombia even now, when, she asserts, most of the drug cartels have been cleaned up, women must make patient, consistent effort to change the country's basic institutions. Otherwise, she fears, one set of corrupt power monopolists merely replaces another.

Why did our panelists for the most part agree that women had more patience to listen? Marina Skrabolo answered, "Because it seems to me the whole point of peace work and the shift that is necessary to achieve peace, is

*patience*---taking time to hear the truth that is not my own and which often has nothing to do with my truth and sounds contradictory to my own experience. In my region [the Balkans], this capacity to listen and to open a space to hear in which truths can co-exist-that process has come really late and been created by women."

## **Rebuilding and Reconciling**

In the aftermath of conflict, women contribute to the urgent work of repairing and healing their communities. They work for preventive measures against future conflict and participate in the formal processes of reconciliation many countries establish. Betty Bigombe marveled at the staunchness of Somali women with little support, trying to pull their communities together after terrible war. We have already seen Croatian women's approach to bridging divides between ethnic groups by setting up local self-help groups to provide basic goods like bricks and laundry soap.

Perhaps the most moving episode of women's outreach toward reconciliation was related by Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. Most witnesses who came before South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission were women, and most of these were women of color. "There was the gesture of forgiveness from both men and women...but with men there was a kind of distancing. It's very hard to explain-these very gray areas of forgiveness. What does forgiveness mean?" mused GobodoMadikizela.

She found "particularly intriguing how the women expressed their forgiveness. Women were more inclined to connect to the individual personally or somehow to connect the experience of the perpetrator to what might have potentially happened with their own children."

"There was human connection at a very deep level; I heard one woman say [to a perpetrator], 'Oh, you could have been my son.'" What this conveys, Gobodo-Madikizela thought, "is a certain awareness from the person granting forgiveness that the roles of victim and perpetrator are interchangeable-you could have been in the shoes of the perpetrator."

"What really captures me," she concluded, is a very traditional African notion of humanness-"the idea that to be a human being, you depend on me to give you your humanity."

# 4 The Special Role in Conflict of Nongovernmental and Multilateral Organizations and the International Legal Regime

*"The future of the International Criminal Court is probably the single greatest hope for some accountability for violence against women in conflict situations.... The key to affording better protection is not only to concentrate on post-conflict remedies and redresses, but to work to support women's equality in all aspects of their lives in times of peace, so they're less likely to be victimized in times of war. "*

*-LaShawn Jefferson, Human Rights Watch*

Nongovernmental organizations have been a main vehicle for women achieving places at the table, as previous chapters have shown. Not only are women well represented in their rank and file, but more women occupy leadership positions in NGOs than in other public institutions. The NGO becomes a stepping-stone to higher-level involvement, political or appointive office. Further, NGOs are "absolutely critical" in keeping up public pressure for international and domestic justice toward women. "The activism of NGOs will never be replaced, even by the International Criminal Court," asserted LaShawn Jefferson, deputy director of the women's division of Human Rights Watch.

Multilateral organizations now place some women in positions of responsibility, but more women must join top ranks of the most powerful operational divisions. Examples drawn from the experience of senior women at the United Nations appear in Chapter 5. They have shaped the Women's Foreign Policy Group's perception of necessary next steps that will bring more women to "a place at the table."

The work of NGOs and multilaterals is complemented by the past decade's expansion of an international legal regime that can reach beyond national boundaries. The international war crimes tribunals established by the U.N. Security Council in the Hague (for the former Yugoslavia) and in Tanzania (for Rwanda) are rippling slowly into public consciousness and domestic legislation. The International Criminal Court treaty is important to this gradual development, although ratification is proceeding very slowly.

National decisions to hold former leaders such as Chile's General Pinochet indictable for state offenses while in office are encouraging signs of the world community's newly expressed lack of tolerance for behavior contravening the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women played a role in achieving the composition of these tribunals. As prosecutors and judges, they continue to affect the decisions of these bodies.

The field of "transitional justice" represented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and parallel bodies in other nations, has been a large area of women's involvement. Without attributing sole credit to women, it is fact that women in NGOs such as the longtime antiapartheid movements in South Africa or women's groups in the former Yugoslavia, led the way toward accountability for crimes committed under old regimes and in war. In Northern Ireland, Rwanda, the Balkans, Cambodia and Argentina, among others, women have pressed efforts to resolve past crimes by accused persons who continue to live freely in their countries. After conflict ends, the rebuilding process needs more extensive outreach from NGOs and more help from the international legal regime in framing better domestic laws ending impunity for violent acts; protecting the rights of all citizens; and providing for equal treatment of women under the law.

## **Nongovernmental Organizations**

We have seen that nongovernmental organizations are women's training ground and stepping-stone to broader activism. More women lead these organizations than occupy power positions in formal structures. In conflicts, NGOs have shone a pitiless light on dark situations, taken risks, raised public outcry, and afterward worked to redress and reconcile former opponents.

Panelists asserted a number of critical functions that NGOs perform best in forwarding the rights and interests of

women in conflict. Capacity building is perhaps paramount. The training, technical, mediation and leadership skills NGOs offer, in addition to support for developing new economic skills, make them the main avenue of practical education in leadership and self-sufficiency. In many places formal educational systems are too weak or undeveloped to produce enough trained leaders and managers to cope adequately with public administration and crises; outside training, such as that provided by NGOs, is desperately needed. Pauline Baker closed her presentation by recommending more support for NGO training programs, and an audience member suggested international NGOs must "do more capacity building of liberal NGOs committed to sensitizing potential leaders to women's issues."

The lobbying, publicity, and media coverage that NGOs must make a great difference in women's campaigns for justice, peace and places at the table. Ann Hope and Avila Kilmurray offered abundant examples of women's positive effect on the Good Friday peace accord in Northern Ireland and its new formal commitment to advancing women. Several panelists cited the relationship between NGOs and the World Bank, which resisted spending on social (as opposed to infrastructure) programs until NGO publicity and pressure took effect.

The panel on new legal regimes praised the support of NGOs in "spreading the word." LaShawn Jefferson cited the 1998 case of a former Rwandan mayor, Jean-Paul Akayesu, who was convicted of rape and genocide: "At first, he was not indicted for rape, but lots of other things. It was only through the work of international women's NGOs and women's rights activists in Rwanda that his indictment was amended to include rape. The activism of the NGO community was highly necessary-even in this horrendous situation-in order to bring an indictment that reflected what actually happened, and to get an adequate penalty for this crime."\*

Panelists agreed that it is not enough merely to train and boost more women into formal positions of power. Women must be sensitized to the concerns and situations of women in their societies, especially their victimization in domestic life and its corollary of violent victimization in war. Marina Skrabolo said NGOs in the former Yugoslavia had to be responsible "for making links between women activists and women politicians, and working with women in power, so that they expand their agendas; it's a main focus."

For private funders and government aid agencies, NGOs often deliver the critical services on the ground, whether medical aid, food, communications or skills training. Since the resources of NGOs are limited, more must be done to coordinate and avoid competition, duplication and contradiction of effort. As Ancil Adrian-Paul stated in the context of building Internet capacity: "The pot of money that goes around is very small, relative to governments, and NGOs in all situations need to work more coherently with each other."

Government aid-givers must improve speed and coordination, too. One panel discussed the difficulties of small local NGOs in securing aid from the U.S. due to red tape; an audience member from an NGO reported that American aid disbursement appeared better-coordinated with NGO

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\* *The Prosecutor vs. Jean-Paul Akayesu*, Judgment, 2 September 1998, Case No. ICTR-96-4-T (ICTR Trial Chamber 1).



partners than in the past-"and frankly, better than many European donors I work with, in particular the European Union."

No one disagreed that the task of speeding aid needs more work, on all sides, because NGOs are indispensable during conflicts-not only as local pipelines for aid, but as sources of reliable information. Barbara Crossette, U.N. bureau chief for *The New York Times*, noted that "What's new is the idea that, instead of using NGOs only as funnels for aid money, officials actually want to use their ideas and their expertise."

## Multilateral Organizations

The large multilateral organizations such as the U.N., the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and development banks have recently made progress toward incorporating women at the highest levels. It has made a difference in their approach to social issues and conflicts. "A gender perspective has slowly been established at places like the World Bank and the U.N.," said Angela Kane, a senior official in the Department of Political Affairs at the U.N. who is special advisor to the secretary-general on gender issues.

Assembling a critical mass of women in senior positions is important, Kane said. "Having a woman chief and a number of women team leaders creates an attitudinal shift, even among the women themselves," she found during U.N. activities. The women in senior positions are sources of hope and modeling for women in the lower ranks. Karen Lissakers, U.S. executive director of the IMF, said women have changed the way she sees her own job. She lauded the model of Jan Percy, U.S. executive director of the World Bank, who pressed for more senior women in that institution. Lissakers says more women must fill finance positions, and added the positive note that recruitment at the IMF has improved in that respect.

Carol Bellamy, executive director of the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), appearing on a panel chaired by WFPG executive director Patricia Ellis at the Beijing+ 5 meeting in June 2000, made another point about senior women: "We're all absolutely committed not only to doing our jobs but to making a difference for women. If someone helped open the doors for us, and people supported us, then we're not doing our jobs if we don't make sure that door is wide open for other women to walk through." Angela Kane emphasized the models women need, saying women in senior posts still must demonstrate that "they're able, not afraid to take on more responsibility, and fighting hard within the system." All agreed that persistent NGO pressure and monitoring are indispensable to seating more women at the table.

Women should be more visible in peacekeeping and political operations at the United Nations, panelists agreed. Craig Murphy, as noted earlier, said a correlation has been found between the numbers of women in peacekeeping operations, and the relative success of those operations in the field. Melinda Kimble, former senior U.S. State Department official now at the United Nations Foundation, echoed this point. She recommends that more senior women with military background and training be recruited for U.N. peacekeeping and security operations.

## The International Legal Regime

The greatest recent hope for justice for women victimized by conflict was born with the international war crimes tribunals, established in 1993 by the U.N. Security Council. Drafting of a treaty establishing an International Criminal Court also encouraged hope. The roots of international courts of accountability for crimes against humanity run deep. They may offer to the world's women some mixture of protection and redress.

Ruth Greenspan Bell, director of international institutional development at Resources for the Future, moderated the WFPG panel on international legal institutions. Her father, a British barrister, came out of World War II with "a renewed sense of the importance of law in warfare, so the role of law in this context is not new...What is really new is the proliferation of international legal institutions and their increased use in the context of conflicts...as well as how they are dealing with issues that particularly affect women."

Their marked significance is using criminal law to indict individual crimes. Group stereotypes and group retribution by victors against vanquished have marred historical trials in the aftermath of wars. This time, the spotlight on individual behavior creates personal accountability for war crimes. "These crimes are committed by individuals, not by groups. Thus we can break the cycle of revenge we see in central Africa and the former Yugoslavia," said Nina Bang-Jensen, director and general counsel of the Coalition for International Justice.

LaShawn Jefferson said women's rape and victimization in war persists because "historically there have been no meaningful consequences for violations of women's human rights; soldiers rape, sexually enslave and mutilate women with near complete impunity and no fear of punishment." The new international legal regime implicitly says a soldier is personally responsible: he decides to do right or wrong. In one tribunal case, said Jensen, a soldier who did not rape, but who could have prevented another fighter from raping, was held responsible. This sent a defining message about

intolerable behavior in conflict.

The prosecution of crimes against women in war, Jefferson hopes, will prompt re-examination of women's low status in peacetime. "What should not be forgotten as we discuss protecting women in conflict is the indisputable fact that women's vulnerability is inextricably linked to their unequal status in society....Women are second-class citizens in their own societies, victims of sexual violence at the hands of strangers, police, and partners-with no hope of redress. Having learned in peacetime that violence against women goes unpunished and is tacitly or overtly accepted, men in conflict situations see women as acceptable targets of violence."

The Security Council first established two tribunals, one at the Hague, the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY), and one in Tanzania, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). A third tribunal is under discussion for Cambodia. After "a slow start," said Nina Bang-Jensen, the tribunals have produced "remarkable case law. A good half of the indictments now include charges of sexual violence. The judges are using expansive interpretations of these charges and the law." She called the 1998 case of Rwandan mayor Jean-Paul Akayesu "simply the most important case in our lifetimes" because it looked at rape "as an element of genocide, which it can be....In Rwanda, and to a certain extent in Bosnia, there seems to have been a systematic campaign to harm pregnant women so they could not reproduce-thereby eliminating an ethnic group. So the case law is really extraordinary. It puts rape and sexual violence where it should be."

Bang-Jensen and Jefferson both attributed much good to the favorable, wide publicity the tribunals received from the NGO community. Tribunals "are really not very good about telling people in the communities and regions what's going on," commented panelists; that's not jurists' strong suit. "Judicial institutions are necessarily slow, necessarily clumsy in communicating....Other kinds of nonpolitical institutions are needed to get the word out." Yet "getting the word out" is part of changing societies' consciousness. Potential perpetrators and public officials must become conscious of the higher standard of behavior now put forward.

That's why NGO pressure remains critical. Bang-Jensen is frustrated "because the major actors, in Bosnia in particular, such as Radovan Karadzic, are still at large." The record of the Rwanda tribunal is much better, the court having tried a prime minister, mayors and other top players. NGO outcry in the political systems of U.N. nations must go on because "No matter what you hear, the military doesn't want to make these arrests," asserted Bang-Jensen. "These are political decisions. Someone in the White House has decided on your behalf that you don't think the risk is worth the benefits."

The tribunals have "also been models in including women in power. At one time in the ICTs, women occupied all three top positions. Every single division of the tribunals has been chaired by a woman at one time or another." Women have been lead prosecutors. Their path was not easy. One defense motion, reported Bang-Jensen, insisted that an African woman judge recuse herself because she had attended the U.N. Conference on the Status of Women and ipso facto had a feminist agenda. (The motion failed.)

It is still too early to judge whether these new institutions will continue to operate in other crisis and post-conflict situations, according to Ruth Greenspan Bell. Nina Bang-Jensen is occasionally discouraged, but tries to keep in mind "that many of these principles and precedents are dripping through the system, being picked up by other courts such as the European Court of Human Rights, the American Commission on Human Rights and by domestic courts in the regions. Slowly, in the way that law does move slowly, they're being absorbed into jurisprudence-and also, one hopes, into the public consciousness." LaShawn Jefferson believes "we've crossed an important dividing line; some people now consider violence against women in conflict to be more than marginal in human rights." All panelists believe to some degree that the tribunals will influence national courts.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) treaty has collected 139 signatory nations, but only 37 countries have ratified it at this writing. Unfortunately, the U.S. government "has played throughout a completely non-supportive part toward ICC's creation," reported LaShawn Jefferson. The ICC is important to women because "It clearly defines rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy and forced sterilization and war crimes as crimes against humanity. The court will include jurists with expertise in women's rights and sexual violence. Equally important, it will be able to receive complaints or cases from civil society, including NGOs." Jefferson believes "The future of the International Criminal Court is probably the single greatest hope for some accountability for violence against women in conflict."

Do these tribunals affect conflicts in other places than Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia? Panelists said the concept of ad hoc tribunals set up by the United Nations was under active consideration where a jurisdiction is sufficiently defined. There are discussions with regard to Sierra Leone and nearly concluded negotiations in Cambodia. Of course, panelists noted, ratification of an ICC would avoid the necessity for ad hoc negotiations in multiple places.

Another model suggested, for Kosovo or Cambodia, for example, is a type of "domestic hybrid," as Bang-Jensen called it, "not an international tribunal, but a domestic one with international participation." Pilar Rueda of Colombia said this concept has been very important to groups working to assist the large number of displaced people and war crime victims in Colombia. There is value in the knowledge that elsewhere, individuals are being prosecuted for violations similar to those the women of Colombia have suffered.

Finally, the international legal regime has strongly affected the relatively new area called "transitional justice," in which countries try to sort out and reconcile factions, as well as redressing crimes to some extent. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission serves as a model. Bang-Jensen believes the tribunals ought to reach out more to regions undertaking reform and reconciliation. Their first commitment is perhaps to propriety, she said: "They talk about not being political, and in their desire to be removed judicial institutions they forget that the Security Council set them up to help bring peace and reconciliation to these regions."

Transitional justice took recent steps forward through the work of Gabriel Kirk McDonald, "an extraordinary chief woman judge of the ICTY," in Bang-Jensen's opinion. "The tribunals under her started to improve, do outreach, to actually work with women's groups and NGOs in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia." International jurists do provide expertise to local judicial institutions, but not enough of it. "They should be working together to multiply the benefit of each other's work" by helping to frame better national laws.

Despite its slow start and uncertain future, the international legal regime has brought women's rights in from the cold, putting them into the center of judicial attention instead of on the margins.

# Bringing More Women to the Table: Next Steps 5

*"In the political and peacekeeping departments [at the UN] the tradition has been that men are in charge as they are the spear-carriers and therefore they make the peace"*

*-Barbara Crossette  
The New York Times*

*"I cannot think of one single issue we deal with in the United Nations that is not a women's issue. Women are every bit as much affected as any man by peace and security, by human security, and by human rights. It is, therefore, right and indeed necessary that women should be there to work towards these goals, with equal strength and in equal numbers. "*

*-Kofi Annan  
United Nations Secretary General*

**P**revious chapters have shown how the nature of conflict has drastically changed from large-scale conflicts among states to numerous smaller hostilities of simmering ethnic, religious and regional rivalries. Women have been drawn in, and, disproportionately, they have been victims of conflict. Their greatest contribution has been through active participation in NGOs locally, regionally, and internationally.

Participation has taken many paths. Women have developed skills and worked as mediators, negotiators, healers, peace activists, lobbyists and providers of services to refugees and other victims of conflict—primarily on the ground, in or near zones of conflict. Many women have stretched out hands to their female counterparts across borders, even in the hot midst of hostilities. Another track has been to participate directly in politics, as the cases of South Africa and Northern Ireland poignantly illustrate.

On professional and political tracks, a smaller number of women have risen to leadership in national governments, as well as multilateral and international legal institutions where they are pushing change. Despite all that women have been able to achieve in preventing, resolving and healing the wounds of conflict, WFPG's program panelists and audiences agreed that women should, and can, play a greater role. There is now an international cadre of women with the expertise, skills, sensitivity and experience on the ground—including in hot spots—to make a major contribution at senior levels of peacekeeping and politics. More women need places at the table as players and equal partners with men.

The Women's Foreign Policy Group believes the first step is to continue well-publicized efforts to move more women into positions of leadership and power. But not just any women. The critical test of a leader who advances the interests of women is not her or his gender, but that person's sensitivity to the indispensability of gender as a significant factor in crafting effective solutions to conflict and other social problems. Malathi de Alwis of Sri Lanka observed, "Unless women who come into power become accountable not just to their political parties, but to large civic-based movements such as the feminist and peace movements, we won't be able to shift how women [in power] will operate."

Both women and men of good conscience, if they are mindful of human rights and equity, can make equal contributions to progress toward justice for women.

After a brief look at the United Nations as an initial target for increasing women's participation, this chapter records first-hand insights from women in power at the U.N. WFPG's recommendations for next steps, extracted from our discussions in "The Changing Nature of Conflict" series, follow. We close by suggesting future activities that might contribute toward reaching those goals.

## **New United Nations Initiatives**

The United Nations is a main target for enlarging women's participation in peacekeeping and conflict resolution. As seen from his quote heading this chapter, Secretary General Kofi Annan understands the importance of more women participating in decision making. He created the post of deputy secretary general and filled it with Louise Frechette of

Canada, former Canadian ambassador to the U.N. and Canada's deputy minister of defense. He has made a commitment to implementing this goal and has pressed U.N. agencies to increase recruitment and promotion of women employees. Progress has been made, as illustrated below. Yet all agree that more must occur.

Appendices at the end of this report contain important U.N. documents produced for the Beijing+5 conference last June addressing the issues taken up in our series. Appendices also include U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 of October 31, 2000, an important follow-up step. Resolution 1325 challenges U.N. member states and the secretary general to put into practice earlier commitments. It urges member states to increase the representation of women at all decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes at headquarters and in the field. The resolution further urges governments to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and fully to respect international law applicable to the rights of women and girls.

The challenge now will be to monitor progress closely and maintain pressure for concrete actions and quantifiable implementation of these laudable goals. In another move, the U.N. has designated "Women and War" as the theme for the 2001 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals for humanitarian assistance, thus adding another area for monitoring.

## **Lessons from U.N. Women in Power**

The comments of prominent women leaders in the U.N. today reveal what sensitized women in power can accomplish. These women know well the obstacles to bringing more women to the table, why that goal is meaningful, and how they personally contribute to women's advancement. They know it makes a difference to be a woman who sits in their executive chairs. Let's take a moment to review their insights.

At the Beijing+5 conference in New York last year, a WFPG panel on "Women: The New Leadership in U.N. Agencies" was moderated by WFPG executive director Patricia Ellis. Five women agency heads discussed their work and insights: Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, director general of the World Health Organization; Dr. Nafis Sadik, executive director of the U.N. Population Fund; Catherine Bertini, executive director of the World Food Program; Carol Bellamy, executive director of UNICEF; and Mary Robinson, United Nations high commissioner for human rights.

*Preparation and Political Experience.* Women leaders at the U.N. include professionally trained lawyers and physicians, government officials, local and national politicians. For example, Carol Bellamy had been a New York City Council president and U.S. Peace Corps director. Mary Robinson was president of Ireland and Gro Brundtland was prime minister of Norway. Dr. Brundtland stated that the secretary general is looking for women to fill jobs such as those of special representatives. To qualify for those posts, however, women must develop enough experience in the political arena and in cross-cultural work. She stressed the importance of developing sufficient numbers of qualified women candidates, so that women could unquestionably be selected for available mediator/peacekeeper positions.

*Role Models and Agents of Change.* These agency heads were role models, but also agents of change who felt a commitment to other women. As Carol Bellamy said, "Making a difference for women is our responsibility, since others helped open the door for us. We're not doing our job if we don't make sure that the door is wide open for other women to walk through."

They have been agents of change in their jobs in several respects. All have greatly increased the number of women staffing their agencies, including senior professional women. Dr. Nafis Sadik reported that 60 percent of UNPF's senior decision-making staff are women. At the World Food Program, Catherine Bertini said, the number of women professionals has doubled from 17 to 34 percent since she took over the agency. Mary Robinson said she was able to make a difference when asked to appoint a commission of inquiry into Indonesia and East Timor—she appointed a commission of five whose majority, including the chair, were women.

Like the other agency chiefs, Bertini asserted that, beyond merely raising the numbers of women, it's important to "change attitudes and the critical mass and the way people think and behave within the organization." These women have worked to put gender aspects of problems into the mainstream of policy making, often fighting hard for their views. Bertini recounted how she and Carol Bellamy fought within the U.N. about supplying food to Afghanistan, where girls could not attend school and food aid would go to boys alone. Catherine Bertini was able to make the decision that worldwide food aid should be directed to women recipients, the family members most invested in nurture. The women leaders agreed they'd contributed to progress in gender as well as human rights mainstreaming. They have also sharpened the institution's focus on female poverty and victimization.

*Inclusion and Coalition.* Another difference since there are more women heads of agencies and senior officials in the U.N. secretariat is that they all meet together twice a year, in addition to interacting closely in their daily work. These women agency heads, like many U.N. staff women, are often employed on humanitarian issues. Nevertheless, women

leaders exert a strong effect even if they are not officially located in the political or peacekeeping departments. Carol Bellamy aptly pointed out that, despite the U.N. dichotomy between the humanitarian, economic and social side and the peace and security side-the agencies these women head "have more to do with real peace and real security than some other parts of the U.N." This reflects again our panelists' assertion that the standard perception of security is changing from a Cold War concept of national security and military security to a broader, sustainable human security.

## Recommendations

The series as a whole prompted the following set of general recommendations for individuals and organizations that aim to increase the capacity of women to play important roles in preventing and resolving conflicts. The Women's Foreign Policy Group found that the series also offered an opportunity to expand a number of ideas for followup activities. That list follows the recommendations below.

- *Groom* more women now at mid-career levels for decision-making positions in multilateral organizations, particularly but not solely in political, peacekeeping and security operations.
- *Monitor* progress toward this goal each year-by the U.N. in light of Security Council Resolution 1325, but also by other multilateral and regional organizations such as the OAU, OAS, EU and ASEAN.
- *Identify* lists of likely women candidates and provide them to these institutions, making certain to cast a broad net for candidates from the military and defense establishments and foreign ministries, but also government and private-sector business, including the media. Within individual nations, NGOs should press foreign and defense ministries to raise the number of women officials in their ranks.
- *Publicize* progress and shortfalls regularly, using access to media while intensifying public awareness of the usefulness of more women in power. Offer assistance in finding eligible women to relevant institutions and ministries.
- *Prepare* more women by placing high priority on furnishing leadership, political, and communications skills training for women through NGO programs of all types, as well as by mentoring fledgling leaders.

## Suggestions for Future WFPG Activities

- The WFPG proposes to prepare a periodic report for public release, tracking how the U.N. and other multilateral institutions progress in placing more women in senior positions. Since the effort to increase women's numbers in upper ranks will be long-term, such a report would become a regular milepost of progress that itself could encourage progress.
- The WFPG plans to identify and submit lists of promising women candidates to the United Nations, drawing upon the private sector and general government as well as the foreign affairs and defense communities.
- The WFPG will continue to convene gatherings of current and former women ambassadors, heads of state, foreign ministers, regional and international officials, and women in the media; the particular object will be to encourage attitude change toward women in conflict resolution, peacekeeping and political operations at high levels. Occasional reports of these efforts to change the culture of power will be significantly publicized.
- The WFPG will continue leadership and mentoring activities that support women in international affairs at all stages of their careers, especially with respect to the next generation of leaders.

- The WFPG recommends programs to follow up issues raised in "The Changing Nature of Conflict" series. Topics might include:

1. How current women leaders address conflict

2. The younger generation begins to deal with conflict in their societies
3. Views from the front line: local activists, aid workers, reporters, others

4. A regional focus on hot spots: in Africa, the Balkans, Latin America, the Middle East and South Asia.

The WFPG will continue to work cooperatively with other organizations that share our goals in order to magnify our activities' impact.

"The Changing Nature of Conflict" series was thus a beginning, not an end, to a more vigorous effort to move women into positions of leadership. Members of the Women's Foreign Policy Group will continue to cooperate with other organizations, NGOs, multilateral institutions and the independent-sector foundation community in working toward the goal of securing women's rightful "place at the table."

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# Appendices

## United Nations

**S/RES/1325 (2000)**

**Security Council**

**Distr.: General**

**31 October 2000**

**Resolution 1325 (2000)**

**Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000**

### *The Security Council*

*Recalling* its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President, and recalling also the statement of its President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day) of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816),

*Recalling also* the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict,

*Bearing in mind* the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security,

*Expressing* concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and recognizing the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation,

*Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

*Reaffirming also* the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

*Emphasizing* the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls,

*Recognizing* the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard noting the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

*Recognizing also* the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,



*Recognizing* that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

*Noting* the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1. *Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;
2. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;
3. *Urges* the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard calls on Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;
4. *Further urges* the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;
5. *Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and urges the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peace-building measures, invites Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and further requests the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;
7. *Urges* Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;
8. *Calls* on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:
  - (a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;
  - (b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;
  - (c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;
9. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

10. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;
11. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard stresses the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;
12. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;
13. *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;
14. *Reaffirms* its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;
15. *Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;
16. *Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and further invites him to submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;
17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;
18. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

## United Nations General Assembly Special Session

"Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development Peace for the Twenty-first Century," New York, 5-9 June 2000

### Women in Power and Decision-Making

Women's representation at the highest levels of national and international decision making has not changed in the five years since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Women continue to be in the minority in national parliaments, with an average of 13 per cent worldwide in 1999, despite the fact that women comprise the majority of the electorate in almost all countries.

The Platform for Action adopted at Beijing explains that women's lives should be viewed within the social, economic and political framework of the society, and not outside of it. The Beijing Conference reaffirmed that "women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and incorporation of women's perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved."

The Beijing Platform for Action also affirms that women have the equal right to participate in governance and, through that participation, contribute to the redefining of political priorities, placing new questions on the political agenda and providing new perspectives on mainstream political issues. The Platform defined two strategic objectives under this critical area: to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making, and to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

Besides the Beijing document, a number of international instruments have affirmed the principle of equal participation of women and men in power and decision-making, including the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

At its forty-first session in 1997, the UN Commission on the Status of Women reaffirmed the need to identify and implement the measures that would redress the under-representation of women in decision-making. The removal of discriminatory practices and the introduction of positive action programmes were identified as effective policy instruments to that end.

#### No Real Change in the Gap Between Women and Men

Despite the long-standing recognition of the fundamental right of women and men to participate in political life, in practice the gap between de jure and de facto equality in the area of power and decision-making remains wide. As a result, women's interests and concerns are not represented at policy-making levels and women cannot influence key decisions in social, economic and political areas that affect society as a whole. Initiatives and programmes aimed at women's increased participation in decision-making have been hindered by a number of factors, including a lack of human and financial resources for training and advocacy for political careers; and accountability of elected officials for promoting gender equality and women's participation in public life.

In general, available figures show only a symbolic increase and indicate that the goal of gender balance is still far from being reached.

#### Participation at the National Level

As of August 1999, there were only 10 women serving as heads of state and government, namely in Bangladesh, Guyana, Ireland, Latvia, New Zealand, Panama, San Marino, Sri Lanka (President and Prime Minister) and Switzerland.

Women's representation in government decision-making positions at the cabinet (ministerial) and sub-ministerial levels (deputy minister, permanent secretary and head of department) shows very slow progress.

- In 1996, women made up 6.8 per cent of cabinet ministers worldwide, 7 per cent in 1997 and 7.4 per cent in 1998.
- In 1999, there were only 677 female members of the upper house or senate, compared to 5,639 male members.
- The majority of women ministers are still concentrated in social sectors such as education, health, and women and family affairs.

"The Nordic countries continue to lead in the proportion of women in parliaments, averaging 36.4 per cent. Sweden had the highest share of women in the lower or single house-40.4 per cent, according to a recent UN report. The high proportion of women in parliament in the Nordic countries can be explained by many factors, such as the equality of educational opportunity, the recognition by women of the importance of voting and helping to determine election results, and the establishment of comprehensive national state policies aimed at the reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities for women and men.

A reverse process occurred in Eastern Europe, where the percentage of women in parliament has seriously declined with the transformation towards a market economy and free parliamentary elections. The abolition of quotas for women, which had existed under the old regimes, drastically reduced their number in parliaments. Although the situation has been gradually improving in some countries, the Eastern European experience confirms that the establishment of a pluralist parliamentary democracy does not in itself guarantee equal representation of women and men in political decision-making.

### **International Level**

At the international level, there was an increase in the representation of women among Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York, from seven women as of January 1994 rising to 12 women as of April 2000.

The United Nations system has focused on increasing the number of women in decision-making positions at all levels and in various sectors. While certain progress has been made in improving the representation of women in the senior and policy-making levels in the United Nations Secretariat, the goal of 50 per cent by the year 2000 has not been reached. However, the statistics on the status of women in the Secretariat continue to show slow but steady improvement.

- Since 1 January 1999, the percentage of women on appointments subject to geographical distribution increased from 37.7 per cent to 38.6 per cent.
- Although the rate of progress in improving women's overall representation remains slow, headway has been made in improving the representation of women at the senior and policymaking levels. Since the submission of the Secretary-General's Strategic Plan of Action for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat (1995-2000) in November 1994, the percentage of women at the Deputy Director level and above has risen from 15.1 per cent to 29.7 per cent.

### **Women in the Electoral Process and Political Parties**

The Beijing Platform for Action committed Governments to "review the differential impact of electoral systems on the political representation of women in elected bodies and to consider, where appropriate, the adjustment or reform of those systems." The participation of women in political parties is important because it provides a path to power and political decision-making. It leads to participation in parliaments and other elected bodies, as well as nominations to positions in the cabinet or other political offices and the judiciary. Action has been reported in a number of countries.

- In Albania, laws and amendments have been enacted to guarantee a gender balance in electoral lists.
- Yemen amended its election law in 1998 to enhance women's participation in elections.
- In Canada, the political participation of women increased 50 per cent between 1995 and 1997. Women's participation in political life has also increased in Spain, which now ranks number 7 among the 15 states of the European Union.
- In Cameroon, El Salvador, Nigeria, Paraguay and Seychelles, women themselves have established political networks, building linkages among grassroots organizations, women's movements and female politicians.

### **Affirmative Action, Targets and Quotas**

During the Beijing Conference, only 21 of the 189 countries that made commitments to improve the status of women

gave the highest priority to the issue of increasing women's participation at all levels of decision-making. Since Beijing, extensive discussions have continued on this at governmental and non-governmental levels. This has contributed to an increased awareness of the systematic changes that are needed to bring about a gender balance. An increasing number of countries have applied affirmative action policies, including quota systems and targets, developed training programmes for women's leadership, and introduced measures to reconcile the family and professional responsibilities of both women and men.

Although in some countries, the strict concept of equality opposes the introduction of affirmative action, in other countries positive action programmes have been carried out.

- Ghana adopted an affirmative action proposal to reserve 40 per cent of positions in decision-making bodies for women.
- The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development was established in Uganda to implement a national affirmative action policy.
- Italy submitted a draft law to reform the constitution to include affirmative actions in electoral laws.
- Finland established a female quota of 40/60 in governmental bodies.

*This fact sheet is based on "Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: Report of the Secretary-General" (E/CN. 6/2000/PC/2).*

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# List of Participants

*Identification below are based on the position occupied by panelists at the time of our programs.*

**Ancil Adrian-Paul**, born in Guyana, is campaign manager at International Alert, based in London, which runs a global campaign, "Women Building Peace: From the Village Council to the Negotiating Table." She lived in Southern Africa for many years, working in the U.N. mission to Mozambique as well as for the joint Canadian-Mozambican development aid organization.

**Pauline H. Baker**, a specialist in African and ethnic conflict, is president of the Fund for Peace, and also teaches at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. Formerly on staff at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, she has held appointments at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Aspen Institute. Her latest publications include *An Analytical Model of Internal Conflict and State Collapse*.

**Nina Bang-Jensen**, a former U.S. Senate staff member, is executive director and general counsel of the Coalition for International Justice. This international organization supports war crimes tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia through legal aid, advocacy, and public education.

**Ruth Greenspan Bell** is director of international institutional development and environmental assistance at the Center for Risk Management, Resources for the Future, where she provides environmental law and policy assistance to foreign governments. She previously served as senior advisor to the assistant secretary of State for oceans and international environment and scientific affairs and in the EPA's office of general counsel.

**Betty Bigombe**, a former minister in the Ugandan government with first-hand experience of African conflicts as a negotiator in her country's peace process, is a social scientist in the post-conflict unit of the World Bank's social development department. Her recent work involves the rehabilitation of child soldiers.

**Barbara Crossette** is United Nations bureau chief for *The New York Times*. Her areas of expertise include conflict resolution and peacekeeping, ethnic conflict, humanitarian aid and refugees. She has been a correspondent in South and Southeast Asia and a reporter on foreign policy in Washington, D.C.

**Malathi De Alwis** of Sri Lanka is senior research fellow at the International Center for Ethnic Studies in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and professor of anthropology at New York University. She is a founding member of the Women's Coalition for Peace in Sri Lanka and of the Sri Lanka National NGO Forum on Women for Beijing.

**Bineta Diop**, a human rights activist from Senegal, is executive director of Femmes Africa Solidarite (FASC), a group of women leaders from many African nations. She was program coordinator of the International Commission on Jurists and serves as secretary of the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development and on the advisory group of the U.N. Program for Co-ordination and Assistance for Security and Development.

**Laketch Dirasse**, a social and urban anthropologist, is UNIFEM's regional director in Nairobi, responsible for East, Central, and the Horn of Africa; she previously served as their senior manager of the African Women in Crisis Umbrella Program. She has written extensively on gender, conflict management, peacebuilding and women in management.

**Maria Duzan** is foreign editor, columnist, and chief investigator for the Bogota, Colombia, daily *El Espectador*, and director of the Center for Journalism in Bogota. She has faced many dangers writing about drugs in her country. In 1994, she wrote her autobiography, *Death Beat*:

*A Colombian Journalists Life Inside the Cocaine wars.* Her column "My Zero Hour" was one of the first in Colombia to criticize the drug cartels under a byline.

**Patricia Ellis**, executive director and co-founder of the Women's Foreign Policy Group, has covered foreign affairs for the *MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour* and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. She was a fellow at the Kennedy School's Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University. Her area of expertise is the media and foreign policy.

**Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela** is a former commissioner of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and chair of the UNICEF-sponsored analysis of the state of children in South Africa. She was at Harvard in 2000 at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy and the Program on Women and Public Policy, also teaching a course at the International Ethics and Justice Center at Brandeis University.

**Sreelakshmi Gururaja**, from India, is the senior adviser in gender and development in the Gender, Participation and Partnerships Section of UNICEF's Program Division. She played an active role in preparation for the Beijing Conference and served on UNICEF's delegation. She is also responsible for that agency's technical and advocacy role in the Commission on the Status of Women.

**Ann Hope**, longtime activist in the civil rights and trade union movement in Northern Ireland, is advisory services officer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, where she is responsible for matters of gender equity. She is a member of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, chair of the Democratic Dialogue, Northern Ireland's independent think tank, and founder member of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association.

**LaShawn Jefferson** is deputy director of the Women's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch in Washington, D.C., which documents and monitors serious human rights violations in the United States and abroad, where she has done considerable work on Mexico.

**Angela Kane** is director, Americas and Europe Division in the U.N. Department of Political Affairs. She served in the office of the former secretary general and backstopped peace negotiations to end the conflict in El Salvador, being responsible for disarmament issues.

**Avila Kilmurray** is director of the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust, funding agent for the EU's special support program for peace and reconciliation in that country. In 1996, she helped found the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and represented them in negotiations leading to the Good Friday peace agreement. Earlier, Kilmurray was the first woman officer of the Transport and General Workers' Union, also serving on the executive council of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

**Karen Lissakers** has been the first United States executive director of the International Monetary Fund since 1993, one of three women on that twenty-four member board representing more than 150 member nations. She previously directed the international business and banking program at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and served as deputy director of the State Department's policy planning staff and on the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

**Wendy Luers** is founder and president of the Foundation for a Civil Society, which assists the Czech and Slovak Republics in their post-Communist transitions. In 1999, the global conflict resolution and reconciliation project of the foundation, The Project on Justice in Times of Transition, became an inter-faculty project of Harvard University. She serves on numerous nonprofit boards in Central Europe.

**Jane Holl Lute**, a former career Army officer, is executive director of the project on the Role of American Military

Power at the Association of the U.S. Army. Dr. Lute has been executive director of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict and director for European affairs on the White House national security staff

**Craig N. Murphy** is professor of political science and international relations and chair of the political science department at Wellesley College. From 1987-1989, he directed the college's peace studies program. In 2000 he organized a joint conference with Harvard's Kennedy School of Government on "Gender in International Relations: From Seeing Women and Recognizing Gender to Transforming Policy Research."

**Catherine O'Neill** is director of the U.N. Information Center in Washington, D.C. and founder of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children. She has written on refugee and humanitarian issues and has traveled to many conflict zones to assess humanitarian issues.

**Phyllis E. Oakley**, a career Foreign Service officer, was twice assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of State, heading the Bureau of Intelligence and Research after leading the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. The first woman spokesperson for the State Department, she has also worked in Congressional and Near Eastern affairs and as the Afghanistan desk officer.

**Deepa M. Ollapally** is a program officer and senior expert in regional security issues in South Asia at the United States Institute of Peace, focusing on Indo-U.S. relations and nuclear proliferation. Her work also includes gender and international security. In 1998 under a grant from the Ford Foundation, she set up the first regional network of South Asian Women in International Security. Dr. Ollapally is the author of *Confronting Conflict: Domestic Factors and U.S. Policymaking in the Third World*.

**Karen Orenstein** is the organizer for the East Timor Action Network in Washington, D.C. She led a delegation of Congressional staff to examine the situation of refugees from East Timor who remain in West Timor.

**Pilar Rueda** is an expert on issues of displacement and gender, and a director of Maria Va, a nonprofit group that helps displaced women victims of conflict in Colombia. She is a consultant to the Government of Colombia and has participated in negotiations between guerrilla factions and the government there.

**Marina Skrabolo** of Croatia is a Ron Brown Fellow at Syracuse University. An activist on issues of peace and women, she worked with local and international NGOs at the Center for Peace Studies in Zagreb as a coordinator of the MIRamiDA Peacebuilding Training Support program.



# Notes

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